

County Profile: Cape May

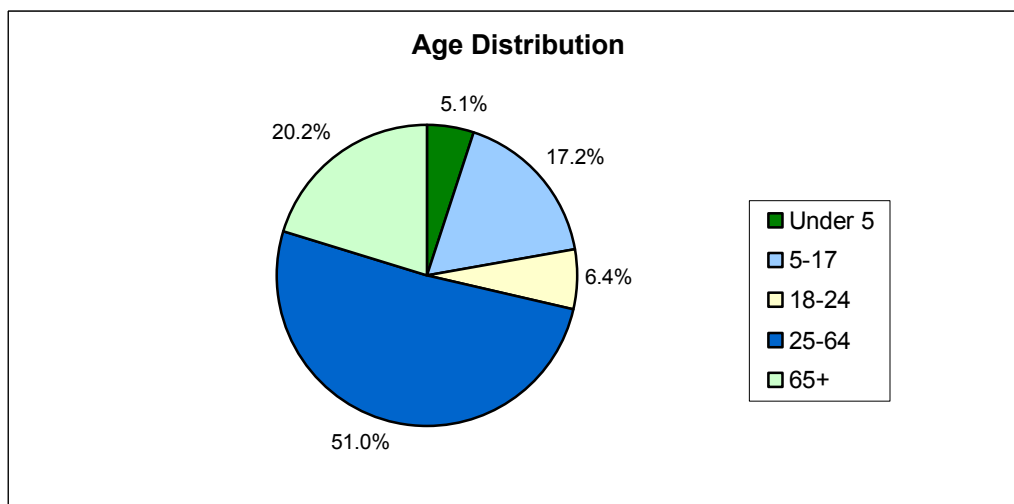


General Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 102,326 individuals reside in Cape May County's 16 municipalities. These individuals are spread out over a land area of 255.19 square miles, which translates into a population density of 401 persons per square mile. Cape May County is the second least populous of the state's 21 counties.

At 7.6%, Cape May County experienced less population growth from 1990 to 2000 than the overall rate of 8.9% for the state. Eleven of the 16 municipalities experienced gains in their population over the decade. However, only Wildwood City (total population – 5,436) grew by more than 20% from 1990 to 2000. Half of the population resides in the three largest townships (Lower, Middle and Upper Townships). An additional 15% resides in the county's largest urban community, Ocean City (total population – 15,378).

Cape May County has 22,859 children under the age of 18. They comprise 22.3% of the county's total population and 1.1% of the state's child population. A total of 57.4% of Cape May County residents are of working age (18 through 64), and 20.2% are 65 years and older. Compared to statewide figures, Cape May County has the second highest percentage of residents who are 65 years and older. At 42.3, the median age of Cape May County residents is the highest in the state.



Child Welfare

Cape May County's portion of statewide child abuse and neglect referrals is greater than the proportion of children residing in the county. The percentage of children in New Jersey who reside in Cape May County is 1.1%; however 2.6% of all child abuse and neglect referrals are generated there. Patterns of abuse and neglect also differ substantially in Cape May County compared to the state. Of the 21 counties, Cape May County has the highest percentage of referrals for neglect and the lowest percentage of referrals for physical abuse. Cape May also has the highest substantiated rate per 1,000 children, more than twice the statewide rate.

Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals in 2001

	Cape May County		New Jersey	
	N	%	N	%
Physical Abuse	142	14.0	12,382	32.0
Emotional Abuse	12	1.2	330	0.9
Sexual	60	5.9	2,179	5.6
Neglect	760	74.8	22,099	57.1
Multiple Types	42	4.1	1,716	4.4
<i>Total</i>	1,016	---	38,706	---
Substantiated Rate Per 1,000 Children	10.7	---	4.0	---
Percent Substantiated	24.0	---	21.8	---

In the Cape May County District Office, the active DYFS caseload is 933 children and 476 families. There are 105 in-state foster homes in Cape May County. There are 230 Cape May County children in foster care, which is 2.9% of the 7,807 children in foster care in New Jersey and more than the percentage of children residing in this county. Of the Cape May County children in foster care, 55.7% reside in a different county than their family, which is more than the out-of-county statewide average of 44.6%.

From 1998 to 2002, two children in Cape May County died as a result of abuse and neglect out of a statewide total of 123. Neither of these children had open/active cases with DYFS at the time of their deaths. The number of all infants who died in Cape May County in 2000 was 8, 1.1% of the 723 infant deaths occurring in the state. The infant mortality rate of 7.7 deaths under the age of 1 per 1,000 live births was slightly higher less than the statewide rate of 6.3.¹

Child Welfare Outcome Measures

Information on various child welfare outcomes for Cape May County is presented in the following table. The county falls below the national standard on some indicators, but performs better on others. For Cape May County, the recurrence of maltreatment in

¹ The Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health and Senior Services notes that rates based on fewer than 20 deaths should be interpreted with caution.

foster care is higher than the national standard (9.4% vs. 6.1%). However, the incidence of abuse and neglect in foster care is much less than the national standard (0.0% compared to a national standard of .57%). Also, a smaller percentage of Cape May children re-enter care within 12 months of a prior placement (7.5% compared to 8.6%). The county falls below the national standard on other indicators. A smaller percentage of children reunify with a parent or caretaker within 12 months (68.9%) compared to the national standard (76.2%), and none of the Cape May County children in foster care exits within 24 months compared to a national standard of 32%.²

2001 Child Welfare Outcome Measures by County

	Cape May	State	National Standard
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.4%	6.4%	6.1% or less
A/N incidence in foster care	0.0%	.78%	.57% or less
Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry	68.9%	59.5%	76.2% or more
Re-enter care within 12 months	7.5%	8.2%	8.6% or less
Reduce time in foster care to adoption	0.0%	16.3%	32.0% or more
Increase placement stability	88.5%	86.2%	86.7% or more

Note. Data supplied by DYFS

Definitions

Reduce recurrence of maltreatment – of children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the reporting period, the percentage who had another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period.

A/N incidence in foster care – of children who were in foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that was the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.

Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry – of children reunified with parents or caretakers at time of discharge from foster care, the percentage reunified within 12 months.

Re-enter care within 12 months – of children who entered foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that re-entered care within 12 months of leaving foster care episode.

Reduce time in foster care to adoption – of all children who exited foster care to adoption, the percentage who exited within 24 months.

Increase placement stability – of all children who had been in foster care less than 12 months, the percentage who had no more than two placement settings during that time period.

² See definitions that follow for detailed descriptions of the categories presented in this table.

Data Sources

DYFS Approved Foster Homes File, 8/4/03
DYFS Caseload Activity Report (DAR-SISM-5), 8/1/03
DYFS, Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2000
DYFS Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2001
DYFS Foster Care File Extract, 6/6/03
DYFS Statewide Summary of Foster Homes (DAR-PCISM-1), 7/4/03
NJ Substantiated Abuse and Neglect Child Fatality Analysis for 1998-2002, July 2003
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data Summary File, Population for the Counties and Municipalities in New Jersey: 1990 and 2000 (PL1)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Age and Sex (GCT-P5)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Population, Housing Units, Area and Density (GCT-PH1-R)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Quick Table, QT-P2.
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Demographic Profiles, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics (DP-1)

2/17/04